Gazette Wednesday 4/15/98

Vote likely for ordinance on gay rights

Foes force review in Fort Collins

Associated Press

FORT COLLINS — Opponents of a city ordinance that extends protection against discrimination to gays have turned in enough petition signatures to force an election, officials say.

City Clerk Wanda Krajicek said Monday that the petitions will be presented to the City Council at its meeting next Tuesday. The council can repeal the proposed revisions to the ordinance or put them on the ballot to let voters decide.

Initial action is expected at the council's meeting May 5.

The council would set the election through an ordinance, Krajicek said, which would require two public hearings. If the first is May 5, the second probably would be May 19, she said.

Councilman Bill Bertschy said the council likely will call for an election, possibly on the Nov. 3 general-election ballot to save money.

The council passed the revisions six weeks ago. One changes the city's process for handling human rights complaints; the other includes sexual orientation as a prohibited base of discrimination.

Opponents collected the signatures of 1,783 registered city voters needed to force the council to reconsider its decision.

Businessman Greg Snyder, who led the petition drive, said his main concern is with the first ordinance, which he said is unconstitutional.

"I don't want to get sidelined by the gays-vs.-straights thing," he said. "But that's going to be hard to do."

Ten years ago, a similar gay-rights ordinance was soundly defeated by Fort Collins voters following a bitter election campaign.

Mims Harris, chairwoman of the Fort Collins Citizens for Human Rights Committee, said her group plans to educate the public about the ordinance and sexual orientation.

Thursday.

Rep. Doug Dean, R-Colorado Springs House sponsor and a conference comm member, said he was hopeful agreemer reached at that time.

A majority of both chambers would to approve the bill before voters could issue in November. On Tuesday, it app agreement may not be so easy to reac

Compromise isn't a priority for Rep. D-Boulder, who persuaded the House t

Prison/Emplo

From NEWS1

I think you'll see it again next year."

The prospect of moving home and family 45 miles south to Pueblo has caused fear and uncertainty among 200 administrative corrections employees who might be relocated.

Several have contacted The Gazette over the past week to voice their concern. Some are single parents who have developed a support system in the Springs.

Others who live in Denver might face a two-hour commute. Most don't want to leave their homes and communities.

Corrections administrators testified in favor of the study before the Joint Budget Committee, but have refused public comment in recent weeks after it became a hot issue.

An employee meeting on the matter was scheduled for this morning at department headquarters near South Circle Drive and Interstate 25, but officials won't allow news media to attend.

Pueblo-area lawmakers want to move the headquarters into a new $21 million state office complex at the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo.

They called it a first step toward making use of a "tremendous resource."

But they apparently stepped on some toes by going around the Capital Development Committee, which usually approves all construction-related projects.

Advertising Works!
You're reading it.
The Gazette
Call 636-0306